



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	SMR Fuelbreak		
PROJECT LOCATION	Santa Margarita Ranch, 0.7 miles east of Cuesta Pass	COUNTY	San Luis Obispo
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project consists of approximately 17 acres of fuel reduction to create and maintain a fuelbreak as part of a large fire defense network along the south and west sides of the City of Atascadero. The project area was involved in and is adjacent to the 2015 Cuesta Fire. Brush, primarily chamise, manzanita, coyote brush, toyon and ceanothus will be removed and treated using mastication equipment which will shred/mulch and evenly distribute the slash to an average depth of 6 inches. Live oaks and madrone trees over 5 inches diameter at breast height will be retained and pruned to eliminate ladder fuels. Hand crews will be used to prune residual trees and complete work in areas where equipment work is not feasible.

Project site is approximately 1.3 miles southwest of Santa Margarita along the prominent ridge east of Cuesta Pass on State Hwy 101. The project location is characterized by ridgeline topography on a northerly aspect at an elevation of 1,800 to 2,200 feet. Vegetation type at this location is primarily mixed chaparral and live oak woodland. No watercourses are present near the project area.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- ☒ Categorical Exemption Type/Section: 14 CCR § 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land
14CCR §15308 - Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment
- ☐ Statutory Exemption (state code section):
- ☐ Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- ☐ Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- ☐ Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

This project fits under two of the Categorical Exemptions listed in the CEQA Guidelines - 14CCR §15304 Class 4 Minor Alterations to Land, and 14CCR §15308 Class 8 Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment

Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at San Luis Obispo Unit Headquarters.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Governor's Office of Planning & Research
DEC 05 2016
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE


Helge Eng, Deputy Director
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

12/2/16
Date